Problem: The Institute of Medicine report To Err is Human documents patient mortality from medical errors. Despite compelling data from Joint Commission on the role communication failures play in wrong-site surgery, medication errors and delays in treatment, hospitals have not adequately addressed communication issues. The emphasis of this study is improvement of the patient safety culture through increased teamwork, communication, and involvement of patients in their care.

Evidence: The TOPS study was a two-year project in three diverse health care settings to improve patient safety culture through interdisciplinary teamwork, communication and collaboration.

Practice Change: A “Trio of Triads” was established:
- Three hospitals: El Camino Hospital (ECH), University of California San Francisco, and Kaiser San Francisco
- Three disciplines: Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy
- Three phases:
  - COMMUNICATION: Multidisciplinary teamwork training, communication skills and practice sessions.
  - PATIENT SAFETY CONFERENCES: Unit-based safety teams (TrUSTS) and multidisciplinary patient safety conferences.
  - PATIENT FOCUS/PATIENT PARTICIPATION: engaging patients in establishing their goals and perception of safety.

Evaluation: The team completed Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Culture of Safety surveys at the beginning and conclusion of the study.

Results: The AHRQ Culture of Safety survey data show statistically significant improvement (p<.05) in 8 of 11 survey categories. Most significant increases: organizational learning and continuous improvement; supervisor/manager expectations, and actions to promote safety.

Recommendations: The TOPS nurses at ECH feel the project has increased their communication. Teamwork has improved patient safety culture. We have multiple requests for continuation of multidisciplinary patient safety conferences. This would infuse best evidence-based practice dialogue between practitioners and has modeled the way for other units in the hospital.

Lessons Learned: During this study a patient safety video was produced and shows continuously on the hospital TV network. We believe that viewing of the patient safety video by patients admitted to the hospital helps improve communication and understanding of safety initiatives. A follow-up research project could validate this

References:


